

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /128 W

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R 200322Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8370

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, MOPS, LA, TH

SUBJ: THAI PRESS ON THAI SGU'S

1. LT GEN VITHOON YASAWASDI (SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT BY THE NEW RTG TO ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF) HAS CONDUCTED TWO REVEALING PRESS CONFERENCES ON THAI SGU'S DURING THE PAST WEEK.

2. THE COMPLETE TEXT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE "THE NATION" NOVEMBER 12, 1973 FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT A CAREER SOLDIER WHO IS NOW ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF IN A DRAMATIC DISCLOSURE TO THE INFLUENTIAL AFTERNOON DAILY SIAM RATH YESTERDAY ADMITTED HE HAS BEEN DIRECTION THE THAI TASK FORCE IN LAOS IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE AMERICAN CIA FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS.

THAILAND'S COMMITMENT TO THE CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES OF THE CIA IN LAOS HAS GROWN TO SUCH A PROPORTION THAT A BUDGET OF 2,520 MILLION BAHT IS SECRETLY CHANNELLED TO THE THAIS EACH YEAR.

THE REVELATION CAME AS LT GEN VITHOON YASAWASDI
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FENDED OFF CRITICISM OF HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND AND HIS

INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CIA.

THE CIA'S INVOLVEMENT WAS SO DEEP-ROOTED THAT HE SAID THE CIA CHIEF IN THAILAND HAD BEEN SUMMONED HOME BY THE AMERICAN CONGRESS WHICH SUSPECTED THE AGENCY WAS GETTING INVOLVED IN THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF THAILAND.

GEN VITHOON-WHO BEFORE HIS TRANSFER TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT COMMANDED THE ELITE RANGER MERCENARY FORCE-SAID THAT AT ONE TIME THE CIA FINANCED FORCE SWELLED TO 30 BATTALIONS ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER NOW IS 19.

HE SAID THERE ARE THREE MAJOR TRAINING CAMPS BUT DID NOT DIVULGE THE LOCATIONS. IN REFERENCE TO THE RANGERS, GEN VITHOON DENIED THEY HAS EVER BEEN CALLED IN TO SUPPRESS THE STUDENTS DURING THE UPRISING.

"ON A PERSONAL BASIS, MEMBERS OF THE RANGERS MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED, SOME OF THEM FIGHTING ALONGSIDE THE STUDENTS AND SOME OF THEM VOLUNTEERING TO FIGHT FOR COL NARONG," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT RANGERS ARE TRAINED TO FIGHT IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND COULD NOT BE CALLED IN FOR DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

"I WAS ATTACKED ON TWO FRONTS. FIRST, THE STUDENTS AND PUBLIC THOUGHT THE RANGERS WERE BEING USED TO STAGE A COUP AGAINST THEM," GEN VITHOON SAID.

HE SAID THE RANGERS WERE ONLY PART OF THE CIA-TRAINED AND FINANCED FORCE. THE OTHERS ARE HILLTRIBESMEN, MAINLY THE YAO AND MEO. THE RANGERS WERE KNOWN AS UNIT 333, HE SAID.

GEN VITHOON SAID HE WAS AWARE OF CHARGES THAT HE HAD GOT MILLIONS OF BAHT FROM THE CIA FOR EX-PREMIER THANOM KITTIKACHORN BUT REFUTED THE CHARGES, SAYING THE CIA CONTROLLED THEIR FINANCES AND OPERATIONS IN THE STRICTEST WAY.

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BECAUSE OF HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND, GEN VITHOON SAID HE WOULD SERVE IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR A PERIOD OF NOT MORE THAN A YEAR AND A HALF.

HE SAID HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO HAVE PROBLEMS AT HIS NEW JOB AND THAT HIS CONCERN WAS ONLY FOR SUBVERSION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION BY COMMUNIST ELEMENTS. END TEXT.

3. EH COMPLETE TEXT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE "BANGKOK
POST" NOVMEBER 18, 1973 FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT THAILAND WILL WITHDRAW ALL THAI VOLUNTEERS
FROM LAOS BY JUNE 30 NEXT YEAR, ACCORDING TO FORMER
COMMANDER OF THE THAI VOUNTEERS COMMAND IN LAOS,
POL LT GEN VITON YASWAS.

GEN VITON, WHO IS NOW THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL
OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, SAID THAT FORMERLY THERE WERE
30 BATTALIONS OF THE THAI VOLUNTEERS IN LAOS.

BY JULY 1 THIS YEAR 13 BATTALIONS HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN
FROM LAOS, LEAVING 17 OTHERS THERE, HE SAID.

BY NEW YEAR ONLY 10 BATTALIONS WILL REMAIN IN LAOS
AND AFTER JUNE 30 NEXT YEAR NO THAI VOLUNTEERS WILL BE
THERE, HE SAID.

GEN VITON SAID, HOWEVER, THE THAI VOLUNTEERS MIGHT BE
WITHDRAWN FROM LAOS EARLIER THAN SCHEDULED, THAT IS, 60
DAYS AFTER THE KING OF LAOS APPROVES THE FORMATION OF THE
COALITION GOVERNMENT.

BEFORE HIS APPOINTMENT AS THE COMMANDER OF THE THAI
VOLUNTEERS COMMAND, GEN VITON WAS A MAJOR-GENERAL OF THE
ROYAL THAI ARMY.

HE HAS HEADED THE COMMAND IN LAOS SINCE 1964, WORKING
CLOSELY WITH THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) OF THE

UNITED STATES.
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AT THE BEGINNING, THERE WERE ABOUT 30 BATTALIONS OF
VOLUNTEERS IN LAOS, MOSTLY VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR.
MOST OF THEM HAD LAOTIAN BLOOD OR WERE NATIVES OF NORTH-
EASTERN THAILAND.

THE VOLUNTEERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THREE AREAS-
XONGLOME, LONG CHENG AND PAK XONG.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8371

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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GEN VITOON SAID THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE THAI
VOLUNTEERS IN LAOS DID NOT VIOLATE THE GENEVA ACCORD OF
1962 AS THEY HAD LAOTIAN BLOOD AND SHARED THE SAME
FEELINGS AS THE LAOTIAN PEOPLE.

THEY VOLUNTEERED TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RELATIVES AND
HAD HELPED PREVENT THAILAND FROM BEING INVADED BY THE
COMMUNISTS, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THEY ALSO WANTED MONEY
TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN FINANCIAL STATUS.

GEN VITOON WAS GIVEN THE CODE NAME OF "CHIEF THEP"
WHILE HE WAS IN LAOS.

"WE FIRST THOUGHT ABOUT USING THEM TO REINFORCE THE
BORDER AREAS AND HELP THE BORDER PATROL POLICE, AFTER
THE THAI VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ENDS," HE SAID.

"WE LATER HAD SECOND THOUGHTS BECAUSE OUR
BORDER PATROL POLICE, SOLDIERS AND THE PEOPLE ARE CO-
OPERATING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN PROTECTING THE COUNTRY,"
GEN VITOON SAID.

ASKED IF THE VOLUNTEERS WILL BECOME BANDITS IF THEY
CANNOT FIND JOBS UPON THEIR RETURN TO THAILAND, GEN VITOON
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SAID THAT MOST OF THEM WILL BE FINANCIALLY WELL OFF AFTER

THEY COME HOME.

"WE CAN CALL THEM UP ANY TIME WE WANT. THEY ARE ALL
VERY PATRIOTIC AND HATE COMMUSISM," HE SAID.

AS FOR THE MAINTAINING OF PEACE ALONG THE BORDERS
WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, GEN VITON SAID HE WOULD
SEE TO IT THAT OUR POLICEMEN ARE ON GOOD TERMS WITH THOSE
OF NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND THAT THEY PAY MORE ATTENTION
TO THE PEOPLE.

"OUR POLICE MUST BE ABLE TO GIVE PROTECTION AND
SECURITY TO THE PEOPLE," HE SAID. END TEXT
KINTNER

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